

Is Bible Class Biblical?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Often, Christians do not fully understand the Bible teaching about Bible class.
 - 1. Some local churches treat them as an afterthought; some eliminate them altogether, while others turn them into recreation periods.
 - 2. Some members treat Bible study as an option, some think it is a sin to miss a class, and still others see them as a waste of time.
 - 3. There are extreme viewpoints on the authority for Bible classes: a digressive group that believes local churches may not hold Bible classes, there are some brethren who think that any group larger than a family but smaller than the local church may not hold Bible classes, or that Bible classes may not be held in any other setting than the local church or one's home.
- B. As always, I care very little for what others think; I care greatly for what is written in scripture.

I. THERE HAVE BEEN BIBLE CLASSES FROM THE BEGINNING

- A. Patriarchal Age - Gen. 9:8-9, 18:19
- B. Early Mosaic Period - 2Chron. 15:3, 17:8-9
- C. Late Mosaic Period - Neh. 8:7-8
- D. Close of the Mosaic Period - Luke 19:47; John 7:14, 8:2, 4
- E. The beginning of the Christian Dispensation - Acts 5:42, 18:24-26

II. CAN A LOCAL CHURCH CONDUCT BIBLE CLASSES?

- A. There are no verses that say, "Thou shalt hold Bible classes in local churches" However, the scriptures authorize and mandate the practice.
 - 1. The authorized office of teacher in the church
 - a. Eph. 4:11-12; 1Cor. 12:28-29; Gal. 6:6
 - b. Local churches are required to have active teachers; this tacitly implies the existence of Bible classes.
 - 2. All Christians need to make the effort develop teaching ability.
 - a. 2Tim. 2:24; Heb. 5:12
 - b. Not all Christians will become teachers - James 3:1
 - 3. Elders are responsible to feed the flock; part of that is determining how often and to what extent the local flock feeds - 1Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28
- C. How classes are conducted is determined by autonomous congregations.
 - 1. By sending individuals out to teach one on one - Acts 5:42
 - 2. By holding studies in people's homes - Acts 10:24-25, 33
 - 3. In public settings - Acts 16:13-14
 - 4. In facilities rented or owned by the local church - Rom. 16:5
- D. Bible classes are works of the church, but not the exclusive work of the church
 - 1. The scriptures speak of individuals who taught apart from the direct oversight of a local congregation - Acts 8:26-40
 - 2. The scriptures speak of families who gather for Bible study - Eph. 6:4

3. The scriptures speak of schools of prophets who studied the Law of Moses and the prophets - 2Kings 6:1
4. The scriptures speak of groups of teachers and preachers traveling about teaching and preaching - Acts 21:8

III. WHO IS TO BE TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE CLASSES?

- A. Doesn't the Bible say that children are to be taught at home?
 1. Fathers are to teach children - Eph. 6:4
 2. Mothers are to teach their children - Prov. 1:8; 2Tim 3:15, 1:5
- B. However, Jesus and John taught the children of others
 1. Mark 10:14-16; 1John 2:13-14

IV. CAN A SISTER TEACH BIBLE CLASSES?

- A. Yes - Titus 2:3-5
- B. However, there are limits on whom, where, and when a woman may teach.
 1. A woman may not exercise authority over men in a formal, spiritual setting - 1Cor. 11:3; 1Tim 2:11-15
 2. However, she can participate in teaching a man in an informal setting - Acts 18:26
 3. A woman can participate in a Bible class so long as she does not oversee it. Silence in church notwithstanding - 1Cor. 14:34-37
 4. Even in the assembly, there are occasions where women must speak: singing (Eph. 5:19), confession before baptism (Rom. 10:9-10)
 5. Women spoke in spiritual gatherings: Sapphira responded to Peter (Acts 5:8), Rhoda announced Peter's release (Acts 12:12-15)

V. IS BIBLE CLASS A PART OF WORSHIP?

- A. The scriptures recognize that there is a difference between a Bible class and a worship assembly; it is based on the intent and purpose for the gathering.
 1. To be a part of worship, it must be done when the whole congregation is called together for the purpose of worship - 1Cor. 11:18, 20, 33
 2. In a worship assembly, 1) All, 2) Come together, 3) To worship.
 3. In a Bible study, we 1) separate, 2) into different classes, 3) for the purpose of Bible study.
- B. Not every assembly of brethren is a worship service - Acts 15:4, 6, 22

VI. THE BIBLE EMPHASIZES BIBLE STUDY

- A. We put heavy emphasis on Bible classes in this local congregation, because the word of God puts emphasis on it.
- B. In view of the fact that God's word requires it, the elders here are diligent to make sure they are quality classes, and the teachers do an exceptional job teaching them, why are some choosing to wait until after the classes to come on Sunday morning or treating Wednesday Bible study lightly or negligently?
- C. 2Tim. 2:15 - You are required to study the word of God. If you are convinced that you are getting sufficient Bible study without the teaching you receive in Bible classes, then you know more than the Lord, for He wills that your Bible study be supplemented by the local church.